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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 000261

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/09/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [IR](#) [IT](#)

SUBJECT: ITALY: ONLY MULTILATERAL DEMOCRACY ASSISTANCE  
PROGRAMS FOR IRAN

REF: SECSTATE 2659

Classified By: Pol M/C David D. Pearce for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

#### Summary

¶1. (C) MFA Office Director for Persian Gulf, Bruno Campria, told poloff Italy no longer has a bilateral program for promoting democracy, human rights or civil society in Iran. He said Iran froze all dialogue with Italy on human rights issues after Italy co-sponsored a Canadian UN Resolution in 2005 condemning Iran for human rights violations. While Italy does contribute to two UN sponsored programs working in the judicial sector, Italy's bilateral assistance is focused on disaster assistance when necessary (e.g. earthquake), agricultural, cultural (archeology) and micro-finance projects. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Campria said Italy's bilateral assistance to Iran totaled over 600,000 USD and is focused on the following areas: agriculture, archeology, drug trafficking and rural micro-finance. Italy's MFA Office Director for Development Cooperation in the Middle East (USAID equivalent), Federica Ferrari Bravo, confirmed to econoff that the GOI is not engaged in civil society and democracy work in Iran.

¶3. (C) On a multilateral level Italy supports the UN's: "Cooperation in the promotion of the reform process of the Judiciary and Prison System of the Islamic Republic of Iran" with a contribution of 550,000 USD; and the UN's program to tackle organized crime and drug trafficking with a contribution of 1.66 million euros. Italy also contributes to UNESCO's efforts in Iran to restore Iran's cultural heritage after the recent earthquake. He said in addition to the UN initiatives, Italy is engaged, within the context of the EU, in supporting new EU democracy promotion activities in Iran.

¶4. (C) Campria said the idea of supporting democracy projects in Iran is "difficult" for Italy on a bilateral basis. He said Iran froze all dialogue with Italy on human rights issues after Italy co-sponsored a Canadian UN Resolution in 2005 condemning Iran for human rights violations. Campria said the Italian Embassy in Tehran had little-to-no contact with local NGOs working in the field, in fact he said indigenous NGOs working on human rights have been instructed by the Iranian government not to have contact with foreign embassies. He did not know of any Italian NGOs engaged in democracy promotion in Iran, and doubted there were any.  
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